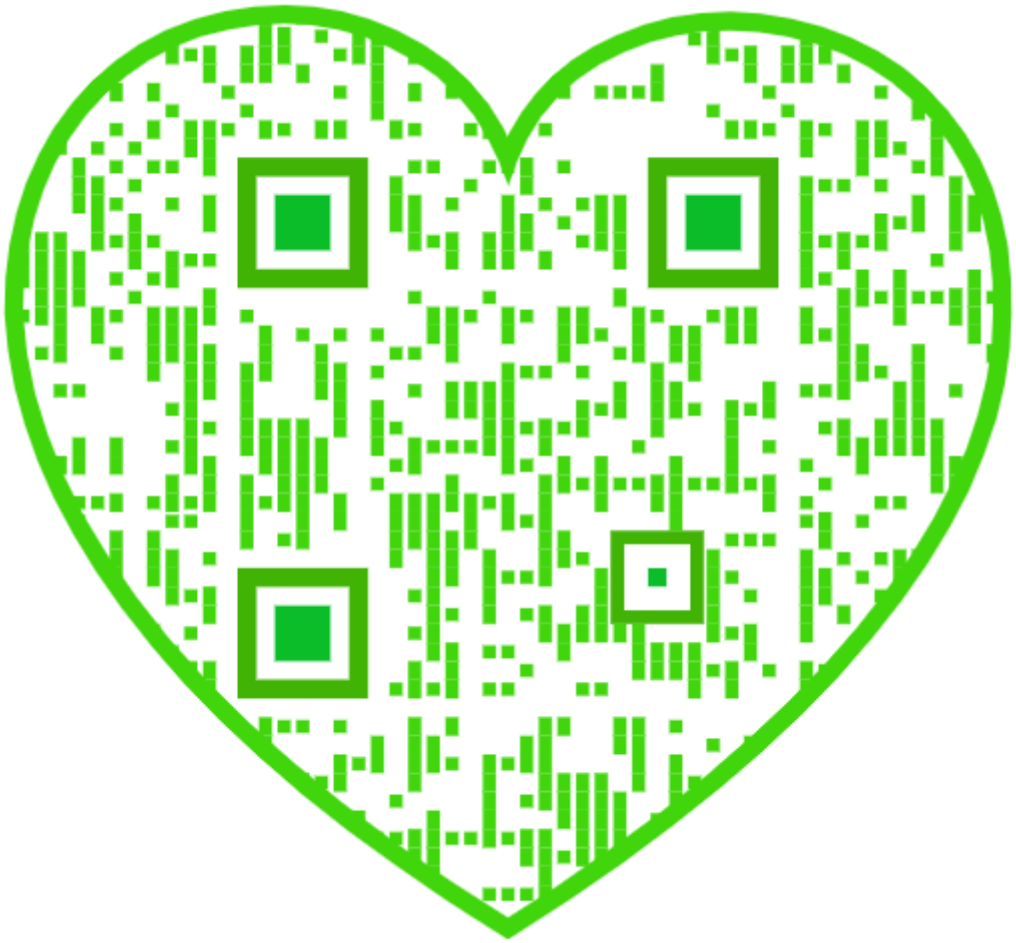

HINTS

FOR

SKETCHING IN WATER-COLOUR

FROM NATURE.

HINTS

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SKETCHING IN WATER-COLOURS

FROM NATURE.

BY THOMAS HATTON.

Ars probat artificem.

LONDON:

WINSOR AND NEWTON, 38, RATHBONE PLACE,

Artists' Colour Makers, by Special Appointment, to Her Majesty, and to H.R.H. Prince Albert.

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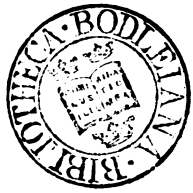

PREFACE.

THE following pages are intended for the use of such Students as are accustomed to copy Water-colour drawings, and find no difficulty in sketching natural objects in Black-and-white; yet who feel, when trying to represent Nature in her proper colours, that they require something more to guide them than their own perception, which is probably not sufficiently developed to enable them to seize the effects that Nature presents, and they are consequently disappointed at finding their productions devoid of that brilliancy which they have been able to attain in their copies of pictures.

The excellent manuals on Water-Colour Painting by Messrs. Penley and Rowbotham, being devoted to more *finished* productions, do not supersede the present attempt, which endeavours to meet such difficulties in *Sketching* in Colour as have been overlooked in works of greater preten-

sion. Just as Mr. Rowbotham's highly practical little treatise "The Art of Sketching from Nature," directs the Student's pre-supposed facility in the use of Black-and-white to the production of Sketches in *that* medium, but leaves Colour untouched, so does the present work seek to extend to Sketching out of doors the knowledge necessarily acquired in copying pictures in Water-Colours; while, by avoiding what is unnecessary to the Sketch, however essential to the finished picture, it points out the shortest and most direct course to the attainment of the desired object.

Should the writer succeed in facilitating in any degree the delightful study of Nature, he will feel that he has not laboured in vain.

BRIGHTON, APRIL, 1853.

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HINTS

FOR

SKETCHING IN WATER-COLOURS.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

WANT OF PERCEPTION THE FIRST DIFFICULTY IN SKETCHING IN COLOUR—PERCEPTION TO BE ACQUIRED BY STUDY AND OBSERVATION—WHEREIN THE TYRO'S SKETCH DIFFERS FROM THE COLOURS OF NATURE—FORCING THE EFFECT—THE STUDY OF SCENE PAINTING A MEANS OF ACQUIRING A KNOWLEDGE OF EFFECT—STANFIELD'S FACILITY IN SKETCHING ACQUIRED BY SCENE PAINTING—KNOWLEDGE NECESSARY TO DECISION—THE METHOD USED IN BLOCK PRINTING A MEANS OF SECURING EFFECT RAPIDLY—BOLDNESS OF STYLE TO BE LEARNT FROM ITS OBSERVATION—MATERIALS USED IN SKETCHING.

A DESIRE to sketch in Colour implies that the student is no longer satisfied with imitating coloured drawings—an art which, after mastering the use of the pencil, requires little more than an acquaintance with the mixtures of the various tints as we see them on paper; but he now takes his stand before Nature herself, resolved to transfer to his sketch-book in its true colours the scene before him, and expecting, no doubt, to make as good and effective a drawing as he has hitherto produced by copying pictures. But as you proceed

you find yourself at a loss. You copy very correctly, and put down all you see, but when you have finished your sketch you have before you a tame, dull transcript of what is perhaps a bright and glowing scene. Why? Because although you have put down all you have seen, you have not seen all that is there. Numberless little touches of variety of colour you have passed over as one tint. Many beautiful instances of contrast, both of colour and of light and shade, you have taken no notice of. Your distance is perhaps too green, or too brown, perhaps too much made out; the middle distance pale and unmeaning; the foreground wanting in power. There is a sameness throughout your work—a dullness and poorness you cannot account for. How is this? From want of knowledge and from want of perception. In copying pictures you have been able to produce the effect of the original—that is, you have given colour for colour and tint for tint as you found them there; and you wonder why you cannot do this out of doors, and give the colours of Nature in the same manner. But when you copied those pictures you did not know what made them beautiful. You did not understand the *construction* of the picture. They were painted by one who knew why he used those particular colours in conjunction—why he placed one colour in opposition to another; why that dark mass was placed there, and that light spray relieved it—unobtrusively perhaps, because cleverly, and for that very reason more difficult to analyse.

You must go to Nature again and again, and *search* for beauty. She furnishes plenty of instances if you will but

gather them. That bold rock is not grey all over: part of it stands out, it is true, as pale and gaunt as a ghost, but observe more closely :—does not blue creep in here and there among the grey? Does not a little moss adorn that ledge? Is there not a rich brown on the further side of that angle—a sharp shadow below that hint of vegetation? These are the beauties that Nature shows to her *attentive* admirers, and these minute touches, carefully noted, bring a conviction of truthfulness to every beholder. Look at those trees again: are they absolutely green all over—or at least of the same even tint of green? Are the trunks of one unvaried brown or neutral tint as you have rendered them? Look at that pale lichen, which gives a break to the monotony of the colour; at the knots here and there, and the stumps of lopped boughs. Here the bark is more rugged and corrugated; there a hollow gives a sharp shadow, and the edge a high light. That road, you will say, is brown, and you have made yours so. It *is* brown, but of an infinite variety of shades; pale yellow here, reddish there, —in one place broken by ruts—and a grey shadow stealing across the further end.

So much for the foreground. Now for the distance. You may take it for granted that *blue* prevails over a very large portion of the scene, and you may safely err on this side, as an excess of this hue is readily detected, but a deficiency of it betrays a want of atmosphere. The common fault of young sketchers is, that they make their landscapes too *green*, not too blue. They know, for instance, the local colour of trees to be generally green, and they paint them

so—not from what they now see, but from abstract recollections of the colour of the leaves of which the tree is composed—forgetful that the tree itself assumes all kinds of hues according to the light that is cast on it, and the density of the atmosphere through which it is seen. This is the grand failing of which you must try to divest your eye. Let your eye *alone* guide you. Put away previous knowledge, and be taught by what you really see *now*. Endeavour to see with the eye of an artist. *Look for* the variations of colour you see artists use; you may be sure they exist in Nature, or else the pictures you admire could not be so life-like. True, they may be a little exaggerated, but how would your sketches look if they were simply exaggerated? Would they not look *more* green, more unnatural than they do at present? Howard says: "As it is impossible with pigments to rival the brightness of light, it has been found necessary to adopt some method of forcing the effect of colours, so as to conceal or to supply a compensation for this deficiency, and *apparently* to produce the vigour of truth:" you must learn, then, how to exaggerate, or "force the effect" of colours by contrast, (*see* Chap. IV.), but this without impairing the truth and purity of the lights. Your touch may be heavy at first, but if you once get power, gentleness of contrast will follow with practice and study. *Power* is the quality that strikes the eye, and places the *savans* above the *tyro*.

A resident in Ceylon brought to this country a collection of very correct but utterly spiritless coloured drawings—illustrations of his travels in the island. On placing them

in the hands of an engraver, he said: "Give me those charming magic touches, which I have never been able to attain." How was his request complied with? They were handed over to a scene painter to "put in the effect," and the amateur was satisfied. This is essentially the scene-painter's study, and a careful observation of Scene Painting forms an excellent preparation for sketching from Nature. Here you find no superfluous finish, and the work is on so large a scale, that the effect may be anatomized as it were, and the understanding more readily takes in the intention of what is left so bold and bare. "Distance" it is that "lends enchantment to the view," in this case certainly. When closely inspected, a well-painted scene may look, to a casual observer, an unintelligible daub; but the careful student will soon find out the value of each touch, and will apply this knowledge to a more decided style of sketching than he has hitherto pursued. The celebrated Stanfield is said to owe much of his wonderful facility in sketching to his practice as a scene painter. When Macready was the lessee of Drury Lane, most of the scenes were produced by this eminent artist, and formed to the lover of art not the least enjoyable ingredient in the evening's entertainment. Some years after, when Stanfield belonged to the Sketching Club, he painted a scene from memory which did not occupy him two hours, and yet so effective as to fetch ten guineas with perfect readiness! So much for the value of *study*. He wasted no time in abortive efforts. He made every stroke with decision, because he knew exactly what effect he wished to produce, and he knew also exactly how to

produce it; and this is attainable by every student who will patiently observe Nature in connexion with the effects he sees produced by Art. *Knowledge* is the grand element of decision in all things, and no less so in Painting; and we should neglect no means placed at our disposal of attaining that element. The same sources of information are open to us that supplied the minds of Rubens and Titian, if we will but resolve to apply them.

Now the peculiar feature of Scene Painting is what may be called *roughness*, and what some people would apologize for on the score of *want of finish*, by saying that more finish is unimportant, for that at a distance it would not be seen. But this is a very unfair and insufficient view of the matter. Not only is there no occasion for more "finish" in scene painting, but, properly speaking, it is highly finished already. It is a mere question of *focus*, for the most highly finished painting would look rough if viewed through a microscope. To *finish* a picture is to regulate and complete the various parts in conformity to the whole; and this effect once accomplished, all beyond tends to *undo*, instead of *completing* the picture. By attempting more finish, you would obtain less; for the real finish in scene painting is gained by keeping the tints bold and firm, that they may blend well when viewed from a distance: if you softened them you would lose the charm of transparency. This is seen to be the case, indeed, where scenery is painted by a timid hand. For want of knowledge, the painter is afraid to leave his colours bold and bare, and the consequence is insipidity:

by adding, softening, and covering down, he destroys the crispness and effect of his work.

And so it is with Sketching. A bold hand gives the salient features of the piece—he has not time to graduate and polish up the tints; and if he did so, the sketch would not be so effective as by the bolder and more crude treatment. Finish may be given at home; out of doors it is waste of time: *power* is what we want to carry away, as a kind of inspiration for our after guidance. It is too fugitive, after all; and I have known artists whose out-door sketches are preferred to their finished pictures, because they are apt to lose the freshness and spirit of the original in imparting this same coveted finish. We may see the same error in the sickly productions of the engravers for the fashionable Annuals and other works of that class twenty years ago. If *polish* was finish, we had finish to our hearts' content then, for everything looked as if it was made of plate glass: the floors looked dangerous to walk on, and the general tone of the engraving showed the same formality and want of texture. Compared with these productions, the fine engravings of the last century would have been, and I dare say were, condemned as *rough;* but in truth they were more really finished, in the proper sense of the term, than their fashionable rivals. A sketch requires no further finish than the dead colouring of a picture receives, but all the force which the finished picture is to possess.

As the surgeon gains comprehensive notions of the structure of the human frame by the study of comparative

anatomy, so may the artist take a hint from the humbler arts, which sometimes develop an important principle with great distinctness. This is the case with the Art of Paper-hanging, for instance, or rather, of the production of designs for paper-hanging. Facility of effect is especially aimed at in this art, as variation of tint cannot be produced without additional cost; and as all the colours employed are opaque, there is no opportunity for blending by *glazing*. The designer is, therefore, restricted to a few tints, often only three—high light, middle tint, and shade—and must produce an effective design with no further assistance. See how effectively he uses his scanty resources! His middle tint is judiciously spread, leaving the high lights to stand out, and his shadows are bold and firm, and placed at the most telling points. No farther finish is *possible*, for the block printer will have but three tints to work with, and no means of blending them. All the blending is anticipated from the eye of the spectator, as in scene painting; and yet the effect of foliage and flowers in this art is so successful, that many an artist might take a lesson from the truth and boldness of the shading.

Designers in this art acquire a decided style of drawing which would be very useful to the Sketcher. An artist is too apt to trust to *vagueness* in shading—getting the effect he cannot tell how; but the draughtsman for block printing knows it would be useless for him to "flatter" his drawing—he would not be understood and could not be followed by the block cutter: his line must be left decided

and firm, and without the slightest vagueness. If this precision were adhered to in sketching out of doors, we should not lose time in undecided touches with feeble tints, but should feel compelled to put in the effect boldly and at once, and not without due consideration.

Before proceeding to point out the essentials of Sketching in Water Colours, we may just say a word or two as to the materials employed. And first, of the *Paper*. Whatman's rough Drawing Paper, made up in blocks, is decidedly preferable for Sketching. The rough grain of the paper helps the atmosphere, and furnishes the lights in the foreground in the most ready way. As to size, let it not be too small—not smaller than an eighth of a sheet of Imperial Drawing, nor larger than a quarter. A needlessly large pad takes up time by requiring more labour, but it cramps the faculties to sketch on too small a scale, and hinders rapidity of execution. Many an effective shadow may be dashed in if on a broad scale, which would never be ventured on in a cramped, pocket-size pad. Howard, it is true, in his "Sketcher's Manual," recommends a small size to *beginners*, but only for pencil sketches, and to such as have no knowledge of detail. Too small a block gives a puny, niggling style; no grand subject was ever sketched on such a scale. Moreover, the size of every work should have reference to the size of the tools employed. With moderate-sized brushes, you have no room to move in a small block. You must let the brush *have its way*, for cramping its freedom has an injurious influence on the spirit of your sketch, and makes you anxious lest the

brush should work *clumsily*. Besides, your eyes get weary of their work, and you lose the readiness in transferring to paper the impression made on them by the scene.

The *Brushes* should be of sable, and a larger brush should be reserved for clouds.

As to *Colours*, the Moist Colours in Tin Sketching Boxes are the very thing, and the Water Bottles complete all you require in the way of materials.

All these facilities should be furnished beforehand, that you may not feel hampered by extraneous matters when you are in the presence of Nature, and your whole attention is demanded by the beauties she unfolds.

In Sketching, we have four principal objects to keep in view:

1. Atmosphere.
2. Keeping.
3. Contrast.
4. Variety.

In the finished picture, there are other considerations, but for rapid sketches out of doors we shall be content if we secure these important points.

CHAPTER II.

ATMOSPHERE.

A PRACTICAL BELIEF IN THE EXISTENCE AND INFLUENCE OF ATMOSPHERE NECESSARY TO PERCEPTION—ITS DIFFERENT DENSITIES AND THEIR EFFECTS ON LOCAL COLOUR—THE ATMOSPHERE A VEIL—ABSTRACT KNOWLEDGE BLINDS THE STUDENT'S PERCEPTION—EXTREMES OF DENSITY IN THE ATMOSPHERE—THE COLOUR OF THE ATMOSPHERE CHANGED BY THE SUN'S LIGHT, ALSO BY SMOKE AND FOG—THE EFFECT OF SUNSET—EVENING HAZE—NOT ALL EFFECTS FIT FOR IMITATION—AN ARTIFICIAL SCALE OF COLOURING NECESSARY TO BRILLIANCY.

We can never fully apprehend or perceive the colouring of Nature till we are thoroughly and practically convinced of the all-pervading and perpetual though changeful presence of the atmosphere, and its effect on the local colour of all objects, but especially of those remote from the eye. This is particularly the case with the atmosphere of the British Isles, because it is more charged with humidity, and consequently more dense, than that of the continent. In Italy and the East, where this excessive moisture is unknown, distant objects appear nearly as

distinct as those in the foreground, and the chief difference between them consists in size; but in our own country the atmosphere is seldom without a considerable degree of density, which, acting as a veil hung between the spectator and the object, gives it the colour of the medium through which the light is cast, and at the same time renders the object itself more or less indistinct.

Now this fact, although it seems very simple and reasonable, is never practically observed and acted on till the student can see with the eye of an artist. His previous knowledge so blinds his present perception—he so constantly takes for granted, instead of examining, the colour and appearance of the objects before him, that, so far as truth of colouring is concerned, he might as well content himself with making on the spot mere general memoranda of the colour of the different parts of the scene, and put the colours in afterwards from previous knowledge (as he thinks) at home. But he is under a delusion. Almost all the objects he sees appear of a different colour to what he *thinks* they appear. He sees, for instance, a meadow, the grass of which he knows abstractedly to be green, and therefore colours it of a uniform green throughout: whereas the different density (or quantity) of atmosphere between him and the object, (and which he calls air, and thinks of no consequence) really alters the appearance of the colour of every few feet of land, and instead of being of a uniform green throughout, the meadow really appears less and less green by every foot that it recedes from his eye.

So with other objects. Let him place himself so that a tree in the foreground shall stand between his eye and some one or more trees in the background, and then let him closely compare their respective colours. The distant tree is many degrees more blue than the near one, which of course arises from the interposition of the medium—vapour, atmosphere, cloud, mist, fog—call it what you will, according to its density; the veil is made of the same material, but of different thicknesses. The tops of mountains, for instance, are hidden from view altogether by this very same veil, till the sun removes it. At other times, the vapour will roll away from the mountains and pass off like steam from an engine. In Wales and Scotland, when the atmosphere is thin, the dark mountains appear decidedly blue, and sometimes even purple; but when the vapour thickens into fog, a milky appearance occurs. It is vapour or atmosphere which limits the field of our vision, because the accumulation of it for miles and miles is as if you looked through a long tube full of vapour, and when the tube is extremely lengthened the object becomes hidden by the accumulation. This is one extreme, when nothing is visible but undefined forms in grey. The opposite extreme is of course the smallest quantity of vapour or atmosphere: on a fine day the objects in the foreground have really no perceptible vapour at all between them and the spectator, and they consequently appear in their local colour, so far as *atmosphere* is concerned. Every part of the scene is of course liable to be influenced by the colouring imparted to it by the sun's rays, independent of

the effects of atmosphere; but even in foreground objects it is quite apparent that the parts that recede are more grey than those near the eye: a tree appears most green in the near parts, and greyer at the top and sides; the extremities of a white object are less white, and of a black object less black, as they retire from the eye.

So far we have considered the colouring that atmosphere itself gives to objects, apart from the influence of the sun's rays, and this colouring we find to be generally more or less blue. But when under the influence of the sun it ceases to be blue and takes a yellowish, and occasionally at sunset even a red tint, similar to the effect produced on it by the light of a fire or a candle. A smoky atmosphere again, such as we see at Sheffield and the Potteries, is tinged with black or brown; and objects viewed through the medium of a London fog must be represented by various degrees of dingy yellow or yellow brown. All these variations in the colour of the atmosphere must of course alter the apparent colour of objects viewed through its medium, just as a landscape or even a picture alters in appearance when looked at through stained glass.

The yellow tinge given to the atmosphere by the sun's rays does not turn, as might be expected, its blue tints into green, because the pearly grey still left in the shadows, untouched by the yellow light, interposes a neutral tint, which from its opacity prevents the mingling of the colours.

Although the light of the sun increases the density of the atmosphere, yet distant objects are not hidden by it, because

the increased light falling upon them makes them more distinct to the eye, just as a sudden gleam of sunshine reveals objects on a distant plain that were before hidden by the veil of the atmosphere. The effect of the sun's light upon the bluish shadows is to light them up with a warm golden hue; and when the sun's rays, as at sunset, approach orange or red, the shadows assume a decidedly purple tone, the red colour of the ray being blended with the blue of the atmosphere. As the golden light declines it deepens into red, until, the sun losing its power, the purple gradually loses its richness until absorbed and overcome by the shades of twilight, which deepens the colour of the vapour into a dull grey, or even brownish black.

The opacity of the atmosphere caused by the sun's rays may be seen in the relative colours of the sky, which is least blue where nearest to the sun; and all beams of light, whether proceeding from the sun or moon, or from the artificial light of a candle or lamp, may be seen to be so opaque as to hide from view all objects beyond them.

Occasionally, in a fine sunset, the atmosphere is loaded with grains of light, which diffuse a glowing haze over every object, and reduce them all to one broad and even greyish tone, however varied the local colour of the objects may be. A similar effect is sometimes seen with regard to light and shadow in the distance, which are so blended by the opacity of the glowing rays as to present no opposition except in colour, the shadows appearing equally resplendent with the lights, a slight variation in tint being all that marks

the light from the shadow; thus in this instance destroying the contrast of light and shadow, but replacing its exciting effect by a soft and delicious repose, which amply compensates the departure from the general principle.

We may see a proof of the effect of the atmosphere upon the colour of the light in the ever changing appearance of the sea, as seen from the shore. If we spend a few minutes in steady contemplation of this grand object on an unsettled day, we may perceive its surface assume almost every variety of tint in as many minutes, according as the light passes through clouds of different density. For though cloud is not, strictly speaking, the atmosphere, yet it is composed of the same material and is only different in density, and shows the principle in a more emphatic because somewhat exaggerated way. The light itself is of course yellow, but the different densities of the atmosphere cause the surface upon which the light is thrown to assume the several variations of colour alluded to.

By a constant endeavour thus to trace the cause of so great a change in the appearance and colour of objects during the progress of the sun from east to west, and by observing how certain colours are affected by the opposition of those of a different hue, and the beautiful gradations occasioned by the intervening and ever varying atmosphere, the student may at length, by adding practice to his observations, acquire so true a feeling for colour, as to be able to rely upon his eye with confidence.

In thus *dissecting*, however, the various appearances of

Nature, we are not to suppose that all effects we may witness are worth preserving. Something more than the mere common look of Nature is necessary to call forth admiration—a knowledge of Nature in her happiest moments; either when the combinations of colour and atmosphere are in most perfect harmony, or, on the other hand, when by a powerful opposition the same scene acquires a greater interest and increased splendour from the broad masses of warm and cool colour.

Besides this, as we cannot by means of paper or any artificial medium rival the brightness of light, and as therefore by following the true gradation of the colours we see we should sink into blackness in the shadows, we are compelled to adopt a certain artificial *scale* of colouring, and introduce arbitrary methods by which to force the effect which we cannot imitate in its true gradation; and we thus obtain brightness by using more positive colours than the tints we see in Nature. Thus distance will on this principle be represented by blue, a church tower by dark grey, dark mountains by purple, and so on, as may be suggested by the subject, instead of adhering strictly to the more modest and sombre hues of Nature.

If this licence be objected to on the score of departure from truth, we must remember that Painting is an *art*, and therefore requires some contrivance and ingenuity: that could scarcely be called an art which requires no study, no contrivance, no mental ingenuity to accomplish; and it is fairly and legitimately the province of the Artist to call in such aids as will enable him the more readily to execute

his purpose, which is that of completing his picture without sacrificing pictorial excellence. These remarks become necessary for sketching out of doors because attention to them will induce us to seek brightness in the *sketch*, without which we shall never attain brightness in the finished picture.

CHAPTER III.

KEEPING.

THE PRESERVATION OF RELATIVE DISTANCES MOST IMPORTANT IN SKETCHING—THE NEUTRAL TINT SYSTEM ADVANTAGEOUS TO BEGINNERS—THIS SYSTEM EMPLOYED BY TURNER AS A MEANS OF EDUCATING HIS EYE—AIR, SPACE, AND FRESHNESS, TO BE SOUGHT BEFORE COLOUR—THE NEUTRAL SYSTEM FURNISHES AIDS TO THEIR ACQUIREMENT—AN ILLUSTRATION, WITH REMARKS ON ITS TREATMENT—THE SYSTEM A STEPPING-STONE TO COLOUR THOUGH USED ONLY FOR COMMENCING THE SKETCH—BOLDNESS TO BE AIMED AT—HURRY IS NOT SPEED—MEMORY AN AID TO SPEED—A GRAMMAR OF EFFECT NECESSARY TO RAPIDITY OF EXECUTION—TONE—RELIEF—THE BRUSH SUPERIOR TO THE PENCIL.

THE first care of the Sketcher, after securing his pencil outline, will be to prevent confusion in the various distances. Without this, however correct in form, or elaborate in execution, the sketch will be a huddled mass, disagreeable to the spectator and unsatisfactory to the student, who may, nevertheless, have spent much time and pains in elaborating the scene.

"The extreme and middle distances of a picture are so important and so beautiful, that considerable care and

thought should be devoted to them. Such mystery, such softness, such grandeur, such simplicity are their characteristics, that the best efforts of the mind must be directed to the just representation of each class. The indications of form are often so faint that we must look again and again before their meaning is comprehended; and we must yet always give such *intention* to our work that, however indistinctly the form may have been rendered, the spectator can only imagine the object to be that which it was positively the intention he should imagine it to be."*

When your general outline is finished, get a tint of colour over everything. Shut out the white paper as soon as you can, except in the sky and the high lights in the foreground; this gives you confidence by getting solidity, and unites the scene and realises it. Begin tinting with the distance, and work towards the foreground, or you may get the distance awkwardly strong. Always begin with a tint of blue, however pale, as it imparts confidence by securing at once some resemblance to the atmosphere, which is generally more or less blue in the remote distance. I recommend beginners always to lay in a first tint of grey and brown throughout the subject: the Keeping is made certain by this plan, and the colours may be added afterwards with so much greater confidence when you have thus prevented confusion in your distances, by using a pale grey to express the distance, and gently graduating this with yellowish brown up to the foreground, which may be a tolerably strong tint of this neutral colour. "The

* Penley.

shade and the distance, on this system, are rendered in the general hue which best expresses their attributes of coolness and transparency; and the lights and the foreground are executed in that which best expresses their warmth and solidity. The idea of space, warmth, and freshness not being successfully expressible in a single tint, and being perfectly expressible by the admission of three or four, the student may allow himself this advantage when it is possible, without embarrassing himself with the actual colour of the objects to be represented."*

This theory, as a means of educating his eye, was carried out by the celebrated Turner with great severity for some years, till it became more or less modified by the cautious introduction of colour as the painter felt his liberty increasing. "Gradually and cautiously the blues became mingled with delicate green, and then with gold; the browns in the foreground became first more positive, and then were slightly mingled with other local colours; while the touch, which had at first been heavy and broken, grew more and more refined and expressive, until it lost itself in a method of execution often too delicate for the eye to follow, rendering with unexampled precision both the texture and the form of every object."*

We must not forget that a far higher attainment than the practice of *Colour* merely, is that which Colour itself cannot represent—which cannot be strictly said to have even form—namely, air, space, freshness. These are the magic charms in a landscape, and to *re-present* these is

* Ruskin.

to enable one to enjoy over again the charms of a favourite scene, and to call up all the associations with which it is connected. Therefore, any system which gives facility in representing these effects, is, without doubt, a valuable aid in acquiring the Art of Painting. Turner was content to labour on in this limited medium for many years, and refused to add more complicated colours to his palette till he had thoroughly acquired the faculty of representing Nature in all her forms; and to such an extent did he carry this *abstinence*, that his fellow-students at the Academy, who were conscious of his superior power in drawing, thought he could not colour at all; and they expressed this hope loud enough for it to reach his ears. "The engraver of one of his most important marine pictures relates that one day Turner came into his room to examine the progress of the plate, not having seen his picture for some months. It was one of his early pictures, executed in the severe manner described; but in the foreground was a little piece of luxury—a pearly fish wrought into hues like those of an opal. He stood before the picture for some moments, then laughed, and pointing joyously to the fish, said, 'They say Turner can't colour!' and turned away. About this time, he began to introduce colour in tender passages with evident joyfulness and longing in his rude and simple studies—just as a child, if it could be supposed to govern itself by a fully developed intellect, would cautiously, but with infinite pleasnre, add now and then a tiny dish of fruit, or other dangerous luxury, to the simple order of its daily fare. Whenever the hues

of nature in anywise fell into his system, and could be caught without a dangerous departure from it, he threw his whole soul into the faithful rendering of them. Thus the usual brown tones of his foreground became warmed into sudden vigour, and were varied and enhanced with indescribable delight, when he found himself by the shore of a moorland stream, where they truly expressed the stain of its golden rocks and the darkness of its clear Cairngorm-like pools; and the usual serenity of his aerial blue became enriched into the softness and depth of the sapphire when it would deepen the distant slumber of some Highland lake, or temper the gloomy shadows of the evening upon its hills."*

In the same cautious manner should the student gradually acquaint himself with the less obvious but more really telling powers of his art before he passes on to Colour. Indeed, the Neutral Tint system, much in vogue in the last century and now revived, may be viewed as a *necessary intermediate step* between Black-and-white and Colour. Not only are the tints employed very expressive, but the system gradually familiarizes the mind with Colour, by the use of a smaller number of tints at first, and prevents being dazzled and perplexed by having a multiplicity of colours at command before the mind has power to command them. It teaches the student also to value Air and Space, and not to be ensnared by gaudy colours to the neglect of those much more real and important essentials to Art. This is advisable for those persons even who are capable of copying coloured

* Ruskin.

drawings, because, as before stated, you do not really know the value or proper use of colours till you come to apply them to the actual representation of objects out of doors. You will therefore find it best to begin with one or two colours at first—say Indian Ink, with Indigo for the background—thus first, and in some small degree, identifying the colour of your drawing with that of the visible object. This, if carefully used, will give you a satisfaction and an interest in your work you have not felt before; and you are more likely by these gradual steps to acquire a feeling for atmosphere and effect, and the more subtle and *spiritual* parts of the Art, which must not be allowed to settle down in your mind as a mere capability of copying natural objects without regard to pictorial effect, or you will miss that brilliancy and power which is your especial aim.

Of the two colours mentioned, the Indian Ink alone will give you every tint you require for the foreground, and you may venture to introduce delicately a warmer tint, (Bistre, for instance) where you feel it will bear it, and especially in the parts in sunlight; and the mixture of Bistre and Indian Ink will give you a mellow greenish hue for the trees, the Indigo alone, reduced to a pale tint, serving for the sky and distance. When you find you know your way so far, you may add a yellowish tint in your next attempt, but go no further till you feel you have mastered these. The next step will be an olive or citrine for any deep tones in the middle distance, and this enlargement you must practise again and again if you wish to lay a sound foundation. Afterwards you may add a greater variety, but do

not venture to use a colour freely till you feel its value for expression.

As illustrations of the happy effect of the neutral style of tinting, even for finished landscapes, I may mention the free use now made of it in printing in colours, especially in illustrating musical publications, where three or four tints afford ample scope for an effective picture. Most of these are executed in lithography, but the illustrations of a book called "A Woman's Journey round the World," printed on the same principle from wood blocks, deserves notice on account of the great softness communicated by this method to the comparatively harsh and untractable severity of wood engraving. One of the best examples, however, for our purpose is a lithographic drawing of the Cove of Cork, printed in three neutral tints, brown, brownish yellow, and grey, and the outline and shadow etched up by a fourth, black. A description of the treatment may be useful as an illustration of the system.

At the upper part of the picture the sky is clear, and gradually warms towards the horizon, which is closed by distant hills. The sun, within an hour or so of setting, is near the centre, flanked by clouds, and throws its rays across the still waters of the intervening harbour, up to the foreground, which consists of the open slope of a hill overlooking the water and also an esplanade below. The harbour is full of vessels of different sizes, some of the sails of which catch a light from the opposite luminary. On the left, and in middle distance, is the town, which from the height of the foreground displays lines of roofs;

and beyond these, and still to the left, is the church tower. From the foreground slope, and against the middle distance, is reared a graceful acacia or similar tree, and other trees of lower stature adorn the continuation of the slope. Beneath the acacia and on the left of the foreground are several figures, in different positions and in various attire—some seated, some walking, some standing; figures also are seen on the esplanade below. So much for the description: now for the treatment. The sky is of a light aerial blue, gradually warmed by pale yellow as it approaches the horizon; and the greenish hue otherwise inevitable from the mixture of these colours is prevented by the use of the slightest tint of black. The hills are bluish, with a delicate tint of black for the shadows; and at their base the distant edge of the water is defined by a long line of pale yellow light, against which appears the rigging of the vessels near the distant shore. The water itself is principally composed of the bluish grey of the sky, except the path of the sun's rays across it, which is nearly white up to the near shore, but retires into pale grey, slightly warmed by yellow where it joins the horizontal line of light. A small vessel is sailing across the broad band of rays, and strongly opposed to this full light is a building on the edge of the quay, the unpicturesque shapes of whose roofs are judiciously lost in shadow. The broad esplanade, of a brownish yellow, is dotted over with a number of figures, whose long shadows thrown by the setting sun towards the front of the picture give an air of reality and vivacity to the drawing. On the right of the

quay appear the sails of a number of vessels in harbour, the lights being yellow and the shadows brown, with the rigging and markings sharply defined in black. The roofs of the houses are in grey (the local colour of the slates), and the front of the principal line is allowed to stand out nearly white, to give relief to the dark building before it. The bold tree in the foreground is executed in yellow and yellow brown, with very positive touches of black for shadow; and a strong yellow light falls on the trunk near its base. The other trees retire into a half tint composed of the yellow and bluish grey, which are here allowed to form a neutral green. The foreground figures have the benefit of all the tints in their full strength, to give force and variety to this part of the subject; and the white paper plays no insignificant part in strengthening and enhancing the contrast. The grey colour is diffused wherever it is at all admissible, for the purpose of giving air and space; and the play of light on the water in a portion of the dock cut off from the harbour by the dark buildings is at once fresh and telling, and prevents a hot and dusty effect from the use of so much brown. The prevalence of this aerial tint about the buildings forming the town shows how much may be done by a judicious use of a limited range of tints, while the depth of the perspective, entailing the difficulty of a bird's-eye view, is prevented from detracting from the beauty of the drawing. The *tout ensemble* has much of the force, richness of tone, and atmosphere of a water-colour drawing, though composed on this limited scale of tints and printed by the hundred.

The use of chalk in the lithographing is certainly a drawback, as it lessens the purity of the distance; but if copied in water-colours this deficiency would disappear.

Such studies would be well worth the labour of the student, if only as stepping-stones to the higher range of colour; and we shall make a better and fuller use of the richer tints when we venture upon them, if we first learn to husband and bring out such resources as we possess, and resolve to employ the full powers of each medium. But in any case, whether the student follows out the system fully or not, it will assist him materially in commencing his sketch by separating the distances, and when he has secured them the true colours may be laid in; and the neutral tints employed in the first blot, if slightly touched in, will not interfere with the effect of the subsequent colours, but will on the other hand save time by preventing confusion in the relative distances, and consequent retouching to recover them. Those who feel strong enough may do without this stepping-stone, by using their colour boldly at once: for the more advanced student it is not intended, but for the timid hand who is at present feeling his way, and would gladly grasp a friendly guide-post. We know that Keeping is one of the first difficulties to the young Sketcher in Colours, and this method may be said to be suggested by Nature herself.

Passing on to the use of the more positive colours, your next object is to get in the light and shadow, and on them show the detail. "The colours should be put in at once with boldness, and should afterwards be as little

disturbed as possible. Lay the tints boldly at once to the edge of the outline, and not by repeated touches, or timidly dragging the brush backwards and forwards. Have plenty of colour in your brush, that it may float freely, for on this the cleanness of the work depends." Do not be afraid of the depth of colour in a first wash, even if you think you have given it too strongly. To reduce it by blotting-paper spoils its crispness: it will dry lighter than you suppose, and the apparent depth of tone will be also diminished by the surrounding tints as your work proceeds. This timid *retracting* is the ruin of many a promising sketch. Get boldness first—never fear: if the tint should prove too strong, avoid it in future, but by all means keep up the spirit of your sketch now by refusing to *soften*. A little harshness is a far less dangerous error than the habit of retreating as fast as you advance. You will never get boldness and decision by allowing yourself this contradictory hesitation.

Observe most rigidly the form of every portion of colour you apply. Every touch should be decided in its intention, and have a form consistent with the character of the object to be represented. Be careful to leave the *edges* of the tints undisturbed, as this gives *air*, and prevents the sketch from looking like a coloured print. Don't be afraid of the edge of the under tint not being *covered;* the raw edge is the very thing that gives spirit to the drawing: let in light wherever you can.

You will require at least three washes to express your meaning—high light, middle tint, and shade. Take care to get the first broad and flat, and the others will give

what finish you require for a slight sketch. You must not expect to get the effect by one wash only—it is not to be done in water-colours: you must wait between the washes till each is dry. You might paint in the effect at once in body colour, but of that we are not treating now. You may get a bold effect now and then by using your colour very thick, but not till after you have got in your general effect, and are pretty forward with your work. Be careful, then, about your first or under tints; remember, they will be your *lights*, and must serve you in good stead throughout your sketch. Have them *bright* enough: they are easily subdued if too staring, but you cannot get brightness out of dulness. Have them *pure*, for you cannot get purity afterwards. Have them *flat*, or they will not *tell* when shut in by the after tints. Be patient, and let your tint dry before you touch it again. Many a good sketch is spoilt by hurry. If you have a good clean tint, be fearful of disturbing it—it turns muddy if you touch it before it is dry: you don't save time by that, but lose it; you want to seize the effect as it flits past; but this will *not* do it—you only flurry yourself by dashing at nothing. Painting *must* take time. You can do nothing in colour worth looking at in less than two hours, so don't be deceived: if you have not this time at your disposal, be content with a pencil outline. But supposing you have time, and the effect should pass while your wash is drying, you must colour from memory: drying takes but a minute or two, and it will exercise your powers of retention. It is related of the

famous Turner, that his memory was so true that he painted a man-of-war from recollection between breakfast and dinner, and put in with exactness and truth all its rigging, masts, and spars.

First learn how to produce certain effects, and you will not then find it difficult to store them in your memory for use as you require them. You are learning nothing *new* in the Art of Painting—thousands have gone through this process before you; you are only seeking to chronicle your own experience. The scenes you commit to paper have, and will have, a peculiar charm to you, and perhaps to your friends if you represent them faithfully. They may be *new scenes,* but they are not seen under new *effects.* These have been already witnessed again and again; you yourself have seen the same effect represented in former pictures; but the charm lies in producing them yourself from Nature. You *recognise,* in fact, the effect that you see—you have admired it elsewhere. Aim, then, at facility in producing these effects *in general,* and you will easily apply and vary that knowledge as you require it. Aim at acquiring a kind of *grammar of effect,* just as in reading music the *habitué* recognises a certain set of notes from their frequent recurrence, and which is even called by musical people *a phrase,* alluding to the similar recurrence of certain words in the composition of a sentence. This habit will tend to rapidity of execution far more than any hurried manner of using the brush. It is knowledge that leads to decision, which is the secret of rapidity.

Tone is scarcely to be expected in a Sketch, which is

more a rough memorandum for a future work than an object to bear criticism; yet still there must be sufficient indication of the relative bearings of the parts of the painting, to allow of tone being infused when the sketch comes to be used as the foundation of the finished picture. The Foreground, for instance, should be *paler* generally than the other parts of the work, and should contain more absolute high lights, though the shadows may be deep and sharp, which then aid the paleness of the light. This gives a freshness which nothing else can produce, and tends very much to breadth of effect. The white paper should be allowed to give the high light in the foreground, as this not only saves time but gives a brightness to the work, and aids the Keeping. All lights in the middle and remote distance, having been covered with a tint, will therefore retire, and allow the raw lights in front to stand boldly forward. By this plan you gain all the force your medium allows you. Every picture, to be sparkling, must embrace *both ends* of the scale—the highest light as well as the deepest shade, however few and wide may be the steps between them, however boldly the range may be bestrode; though there are, alas! too many instances to the contrary.

The Middle Distance, again, should be especially *deep* in tone, for this may be considered the principal *shade* in the picture, as the sky is the principal *light;* and if any lines occur they should be kept horizontal as possible, to aid the effect of retiring. But, in order to counteract the heaviness inseparable from a large mass of shade, it is

necessary that some objects much darker in tone than the general shade of the middle distance should be introduced, *and in the effective placing of these lies the skill of the Artist.* A little experience will suggest where these dark points should appear. Howard, in his "Sketcher's Manual," gives positive rules for their introduction, or, at any rate, tells us where they ought *not* to be—for instance, not in the centre, or equidistant between any two principal divisions of the picture. As to what to make these points of, that must be left to your ingenuity. The sudden deepening of the heart of a shadow may do much to give relief to a mass. You may venture to introduce a figure, perhaps; or, if you have not time to make out the detail, put your *point of effect* in, at any rate, and trust to your ingenuity to give it form at home, where you may turn it into any shape you choose that is consistent with the scene; but the dark spot you *must have,* to give the feeling of space and relief to the mass.

A variety of effects of light are frequently the result of accident. The colours run together in a manner altogether unexpected, and with an effect not to be produced by aim. This is particularly the case with the remote distance: where separate tints are placed on the damp paper, they run together and harmonize without destroying each other's hue, and when dry will suggest the idea of corn-fields, ploughed lands, and meadows, of which an ingenious artist will readily avail himself. It requires, certainly, an ardent imagination, as well as skill and practice, to seize these accidents and turn them to the best advantage, but

the opportunities frequently occur from the rapidity with which the work is necessarily carried on. This is where Colour has a decided advantage over Black-and-white. No pencil sketch could ever be thus suggestive of fine effects. Indeed, Colour is the most natural and simple way of representing Nature: Black-and-white, and its modifications, give but a conventional translation of her effects, and her various colours are but studiedly and labouredly represented by tints of grey. It may be the best medium for elementary instruction in Art, and, indeed, is most essential for outline at all times; but it is a medium elaborated by professors, and not immediately suggested by Nature.

But apart from Colour, the use of the *brush* gives power, from the facility of getting a mass of tint at once. Even in Sepia, or Indian Ink, harsh as it is, we gain more readiness of effect by this means: while niggling with the point of the pencil you lose the effect, and your imagination cools. Imagine a scene-painter doomed to produce his fine bold effects with a point, instead of dashing them in with a tool charged from a pailful of colour! Every one must have felt, in the use of the black-lead pencil, a certain degree of impatience at the slow progress he is compelled to make by using a *point* merely, and has naturally wished for a more expeditious manner of obtaining effect; and this is obtained by the use of the brush, which gives the power of producing a breadth of tint of whatever strength or delicacy may suit the purpose.

CHAPTER IV.

CONTRAST.

CONTRAST OF COLOURS TO BE SEEN IN THE LIGHTS AND SHADOWS OF NATURE—THE BEGINNER THWARTED IN PRACTICE BY HIS PREVIOUS HABITS IN BLACK-AND-WHITE—SUNRISE OR SUNSET THE BEST TIME FOR SKETCHING—THE SECRET OF COLOUR LIES IN SHADING: THE TRUE COLOUR TO BE SEEN IN HALF-TINT; LIGHT "PALES" THE COLOUR, AND SHADE "DULLS" IT—BOLD STYLE OF COLOURING SEEN IN BURFORD'S PANORAMAS USEFUL TO THE SKETCHER—HOW HIS EFFECTS ARE OBTAINED—INSTANCES OF POSITIVE CONTRAST IN LIGHT AND SHADOW—WHAT TO AVOID IN COLOURING—HARMONY, AND HOW FAR NECESSARY TO A SKETCH.

THE next important point in a sketch, and that which gives it value and character, is *Contrast*. In the practice of Black-and-white, this is confined to light and shadow and to the disposition of lines. Though both are necessary in works of colour, yet, as you are supposed to have mastered them already, we pass them by, and confine our attention to contrast of *colours*, which gives the principal charm to Painting, and places it above the practice of Black-and-white. As our present object is to avoid the *dulness* complained of by the student, we shall be content, if we can but obtain brightness, to err on the side of crudity,

and will leave mellowness of tone to follow as a natural result of the education of the eye.

Power does not consist in strong and gay colours, but is entirely the result of proper combinations and contrasts. Two contrasting tones must be brought together, and the power of each will then be felt. "In aiming at opposition of colour, we must select that which gives force to the foreground, and consequently communicates the appearance of air to the distance. Thus if the general tone of the light be warm and yellow, we should have blues and purples in the foreground; if the lights be cool, reds and yellows in the foreground give atmosphere to the distance, as neither of these colours in a positive state is found in the middle or remote distance. Some subjects possess a milder harmony than others, or rather, admit of less opposition, as in the effect of early morning or after sunset, where the force arises from opposing light and shade rather than colour, and where cool and warm colours are brought into harmony by a more tender gradation."*

A good first lesson in Sketching in Colour will be to put in your shadows with the colour opposite to the object in light. You are already aware of the three principal contrasts—blue opposed to orange, red to green, yellow to purple; and by carrying out this principle of opposition throughout the scale, you will obtain an endless variety of contrasts.† Remember, a colour and its opposite mutually

* Phillips.

† See Field's "Grammar of Colour," for the elucidation of this principle.

increase in interest as they approach, but when once they mingle they destroy or neutralize each other.

Comparatively, *all* shadows in Nature are true contrasts to their lights. (*Comparatively,* because the colour of each is modified by the effect of atmosphere.) Proceeding on this principle will prevent the tame and dull effect produced so often by forming the shadow with a deeper tone of the same colour as the part in light. It is this principally that distinguishes the sketch of the artist from that of the learner. The tyro is so accustomed to form his shadow in Black-and-white by merely using a greater depth of the same tint, that he insensibly carries this practice into Painting, and thus loses the advantage of contrast that an opposite colour would give him, and his work is tame and feeble in proportion. Let him begin by taking extreme cases, and he will gradually acquire the power of perception of the colours of Nature, which are really contrasted when the inexperienced eye does not detect the fact; and this because his perception is blinded by his knowledge of the local colours of the objects as seen independent of the effect of the atmosphere. He is apt to colour things, not as he sees them under particular effects of light, but as he knows their local colour independent of light. For instance, in a warm sunset, the corner of a white house in light is absolutely yellow, and the side that turns the corner in shadow is absolutely purple—a most direct and intense contrast. In this case, perhaps, the learner would perceive the colour, but in a less obvious instance he would probably render the light by a pale stone colour, and the shadow by a

deeper tone of the same, and thus lose the beauty of the contrast. Take another instance. In the autumn, by the sea-side, the sun sets in clouds of rich crimson, and opposed to this mass is the surface of the sea, a cool, pale greyish-green; and every wave and ripple is a repetition of this contrast, every light being pink, and every shadow a pearly grey.

It may be said that these contrasts arise from the warmth of the sun's light at his rising or setting. Granted; and I would choose no other time for sketching from Nature than when the shadows are long, and the atmosphere is enriched by the glories of the rising or sinking luminary. Then we catch the bright sparkling lights on the stems and leaves in the foreground; then the distance is rendered more enchanting by the cool mist of early morning, or the warm haze of sunset; then the deep tones of the middle distance are strengthened and brought out, and a solemnity obtained which by contrast gives brilliancy to the foreground, and throws back the extreme distance. In the mid-day, on the contrary, the light is too strong and pale, the shadows are short and central, the stems are covered from the light, and a great means of beauty is thus lost to the eye.

The principal art in colouring may be said to lie in the shading, which indeed forms by far the largest part of the picture. The light, except on flat surfaces, occupies but a *tip* of the object; all the rest is more or less in shadow, and therefore the local colour is more or less modified and altered by it. In high lights you may plainly see that the

local colour is diminished by the light; indeed, it is asserted by some that colour is the absence of light, but this is at least paradoxical. However, if you look at a soldier's scarlet jacket in the sunshine, you will observe that the high light, though *brighter*, is less intensely *scarlet* than that part which retires into half-tint, or rather which is between the high light and half-tint. You may see this very clearly in the folds of satin; and in velvet it is so striking, that the part where the light falls is many degrees paler than the absolute colour of the stuff. Indeed, the true colour is to be found just where it passes into half-tint. The high light is pale, and the shadow is always more or less grey or neutral: the light *pales* the colour, and the shade *dulls* it.

Here again the practice of painting on a large scale would be of great assistance. Some of Burford's panoramas —examined by a strong glass, if you cannot get near enough with the naked eye—will show you how he uses colour. The scarlet robe of an Asiatic has but a touch or two of pure scarlet throughout; the high lights are orange, and the rest is purplish, or dull brown, or absolutely black; yet how wonderfully effective is his colouring when viewed at a proper focus! An amber robe is treated in the same way—very pale yellow, almost white, for the high light, passing through gradations of golden hues in the half-tints, till the shadows in the deepest folds are nearly black; and yet all is transparent and true, and the colours all separate and distinct as block printing, without the slightest attempt at softening or mingling or finish; that is done by the

eye of the spectator, and it would spoil the transparent effect to attempt it by the hand of the artist.

The following instances of positive contrast are taken at random from the works of good colourists. The cast shadow of a pink bow on a white dress expressed by warm brown. An old castle, the lights in the colour prevailing in the atmosphere, half-tint in grey, shadows in rich brown. A reddish-brown shadow to green drapery. Purple shadows to flesh. As a general rule, warm shadows to cool lights—cool shadows to warm lights. Rubens and Sir Thomas Lawrence both used pure lake as shadows of green leaves in the foreground. Reflections may be of any colours that suit your purpose.

There are plenty of pictures, doubtless, to be found where the colour of a shadow is produced by a deeper tint of the colour of the light; but this is not an advisable style to follow, nor is it following Nature, nor the best artists. G. Barret says: "It appears to me that the faulty representation of flowers consists merely in painting those parts in shade with positive colour—the shade on a blue flower with a stronger tint of blue—of a red with a darker red, &c. Surely this is a great error, seeing that colour is the result of light; and in proportion to the decrease of light, colour will be diminished, and be finally nearly lost in the depth of shade."

We must, in conclusion, add as a caution, that there are certain effects which may invariably be set down as disagreeable, and therefore to be avoided. Such are greenish-blues and greenish-yellows, they both appear sickly. "Never

place such a green between blue and yellow as would result from the mixture of the particular tints of those two colours that are made use of. Bluish-greens must either be very pale, or so moderated with black as to be nearly neutral. Both blue and yellow become agreeable as they incline to red. Red becomes rich as it inclines to blue, brilliant as it inclines to yellow. All shades of purple and orange are agreeable, but only such greens as incline to yellow. All shades and tints of the tertiary compounds—citrine, olive, and russet—are agreeable in their places, receive value by contrasts of their own shades, and are only difficult to manage when they approach full bluish-green. Green must be sparingly used, even in landscape, whose greatest charm consists of luxuriance of vegetation; yet so it is, and such experience shows to be the case. The general tone of a picture may be yellow, red, blue, grey, or brown; but a green picture, however true to Nature, becomes instantly disagreeable, and if ever a green picture has been admired, it has been, not in consequence, but in spite of its being green."*

Both white and black give value to all colours and tones by contrast, and are particularly useful to the Sketcher, as they give force of effect at once, without disturbing the relation of the tints to each other.

As the word *Harmony* has been occasionally used, it may be as well, before taking leave of Contrast, just to point

* Howard.

out how far it affects the Sketcher, although its principal use has reference to the finished picture.

Harmony is the art of uniting the extremes of light and shadow or of warm and cool colour in a picture by the introduction of such intermediate tones as will subdue the crudeness of effect caused by the use of opposites alone and unbroken. The crude masses of light are broken down by introducing half-lights, which partially unite them to the dark masses; and the strong and positive raw colours in contrast are united by a half-tint made of the colours so opposed. Thus the primary colours (red, yellow, and blue) are opposed or in contrast to the secondaries, (green, purple, and orange) respectively, when standing together, but become united and harmonised by the friendly intervention of a neutral interposed between them. This is the case with all compound tints, however far removed from the primary colours and first mixtures, the qualities of colour being always brought out by harmonious opposition; but a further mixture beyond the tertiaries (citrine, olive and russet) without great caution produces blackness, as the degrees of neutrality are then scarcely observable.

Harmony, then, consists in using such neutrals between those colours or tones that are opposed, as may diminish the violence of the contrast and conceal the aim of the artist in bringing them together, which would otherwise be so obvious as not only to offend the eye, but to diminish the interest of the picture. This is all we want to know of Harmony in sketching from Nature; a more intricate

system would only puzzle the beginner, and could not be used to any purpose out of doors. Considered with reference to Sketching, it is simply that expedient which the force or contrast we especially seek compels us to adopt; and is useful to this extent—that by it we secure that force without which our work would be tame, and with which, unsubdued by the harmonizing neutrals, our productions would be so crude as to be displeasing.

CHAPTER V.

VARIETY.

VARIETY ESSENTIAL TO A BRIGHT SKETCH—NATURE CONSTANTLY VARIES HER HUES—THE "COLOURED PRINT" STYLE AN EXAMPLE OF MONOTONY—BREADTH—MEANS OF VARIETY AFFORDED BY DIFFERENT OBJECTS, AND BY THE PIGMENTS EMPLOYED—AN OCCASIONAL DISCORD EFFECTIVE—UNITY NOT TO BE SACRIFICED TO VARIETY—THE ANATOMY OF FOLIAGE—CRAYONS USEFUL IN SKETCHING: AN ILLUSTRATION—A WORD ON COMPOSITION—CONCLUSION.

ANOTHER source of pleasure to the eye in works of colour is *Variety*. This principle must be constantly kept in view if you wish to see your work look bright and sparkling. You may take it as a rule, that to continue the same tint over a space of any size, without varying the strength or hue, or breaking the monotony of an even wash, is sure to produce tameness and insipidity. We are too apt to fall into this error from being taken with what may be thought a *lucky hit* in colouring—a tint perhaps particularly appropriate to the part first touched on, and therefore supposed to be *generally* applicable—a par-

ticularly *rich* tint perhaps, as it appeared at the first touch (and it might be so from the force of contrast), but which, as you will find, could not possibly be effective in all parts of the picture. Music may furnish an illustration of this. I remember, as a boy, being particularly struck with a fine old tune in a minor key; I admired especially one or two notes, which I thought I had never heard before; and it was long before I could be convinced that it was their relative *position* that gave them a value they never appeared to possess apart from that masterly and harmonious arrangement.

There is a temptation, too, on the score of *ease*, to harp too long on the same strain. It taxes our ingenuity less to be satisfied with the same tint, and relieves us of the searching scrutiny of Nature's effects, which I have before recommended. If we look to Nature, we find her constantly varying her hues; and the more we carry out this principle (with discretion), the more satisfactory will our work be. A uniform tint destroys the brightness and individuality of a water-colour drawing, and reminds us of a coloured print; for there, indeed, we always find it, because greater variety does not *pay*. But this is not *our* drawback, and we should for this reason, if for no other, seek to place our work above this low scale of value for productions in colour. Even in Pencil we seek variety, and in Colour we have so many more opportunities of accomplishing this desirable object. Broken lights assist very much to lessen the monotony of large surfaces, but we must take care we do not sacrifice to this aim, though

desirable, the great and all-pervading principle of Breadth. Still, breadth must not be confounded with monotony. Though we must avoid losing breadth in cutting up the masses, yet we can carry a broad effect through the picture without losing variety. In trees, for instance, there is such an endless variety of available tints, that we may be chargeable with indolence if we do not make use of them. In pencil we can only give the varieties of light-and-shade and reflection; but in painting you need not proceed an inch without varying, if you choose, the *colour* as well as the chiaroscuro. In a tree, for instance, some parts are in light, and others in shadow—some leaves are tinged with autumnal gold, and others are still green—here a catching sunlight effect on a spray, and there a solemn, sombre depth of foliage. The parts in light again afford opportunity for variety of hue; the retiring parts falling into half-tint, which is more or less grey, and the local colours varying from the palest yellow, through rich greens, to the fullest reds and browns.

In banks and roads, again, channelled with ruts and water-courses, we shall find plenty of variety of *colour*, as well as of light and shade. The strata of an earthy bank may always be traced—one part decidedly grey, another darkish red, another brown, all giving the charm we seek. Even in artificial roads there are the ruts and markings—perhaps the paler sand washed up by a fall of rain—at any rate the gradation of light-and-shade; and we can here accomplish much by breaking the tint, and thus get crispness in the lights. We have also the variety given by

the tendency of the ruts, following the line of the road, and straggling out of the picture. Many of the cuttings on our turnpike-roads are channelled down the sides by water-courses, which keep the colour of the earth fresh by destroying vegetation; and the lines of these ridges are another source of variety of form, and sometimes also of colour.

Houses, too, though built of brick, and covered with so-called *red* tiles, display, unless exceedingly fresh and new, a fine rich purply hue here and there, where exposed to the action of the weather. Many of the old red brick houses, even in London, stained by the smoke and weather, furnish a fine lesson on variety in colouring, and possess a richness of tone very favourable to effect. Old dilapidated cottages in the country afford examples of picturesque beauty, not only from the irregularity of their outline, and the depth of shadows in the broken parts, but the roofs are generally moss-grown (giving patches of rich green), or here and there covered with lichen (which varies from a rich golden-yellow to a pale silver-grey), or patched with tiles of another colour, or showing the rafters in places where the tiles have fallen; forming, in short, a perfect study for a colourist. It may be said that these instances are all supposed to be in the foreground, or the objects would not be near enough to be thus minutely examined. True: it is in the foreground principally that variety of colour is expected. Beyond that distance the objects fall more into half-tint, and the effect of atmosphere tones down the colours of the small portions, and blends them

into harmonious masses. But were it not so, the painter who is educated by the study of "little bits," when once familiar with objects in the foreground, and therefore in detail, knows how to put in a touch or two with effect when he finds them in the background. Still, variety of colour in *parts* of objects is principally to be found in the local colour of the foreground; while variety in the colours of *masses*, often the effect of atmosphere, belongs more particularly to the middle and remote distance.

Again, you have the variety afforded by the qualities of the different pigments you employ—almost every colour being varied by the earths and minerals furnished by the colourman; several tints of yellow, for instance, cool, warm and opaque; many varieties of red, from pale pearly pink to crimson, and from scarlet down to purply-red, and transparent as well as opaque, each with its separate quality and appropriate use. So of the blues and greens, and most particularly of the browns, an almost endless range of rich colours of various powers and fitness.*

A wonderful freshness and brilliancy may sometimes be imparted to a sketch by a dash of cool colour in the midst of a foreground glowing with all the radiance of sunshine. A play of light and air may thus be produced, and the opposite tint, though not harmonized by neutrals, enhances

* For full lists of mixtures and gradations of tints for every object in Nature, see Penley's "System of Water-Colour Painting," published by Winsor and Newton.

the brilliancy of the warm tones, and prevents the foreground looking hot and dusty. There is a similar charm sometimes produced in music by a single note in discord, not prominent enough to displease, but yet of sufficient power to bring out the depth and beauty of the other tones.

Your colours must of course be chosen so as to produce *unity*, or you again endanger the breadth of the subject; but there is such an infinity of links by which one colour is allied to another, that with care this danger may be avoided. "As with light-and-shadow, whatever variety of tints may be introduced into the picture, the colours must be so blended and incorporated with each other that they still form parts of a *whole*. Whether the lights be white and the shadows black, or whether both be differently coloured, the same necessity for graduation exists, so that colours must not be in flat patches."

In studying trees, we should, like the figure draughtsman, study the *anatomy*. We cannot properly clothe the tree, any more than the human form, unless we know where the *limbs* are. For this purpose sketches of trees should be made in the winter, when the leaves are off: dry as may be the study, it will amply repay you. Sketch the same tree again in summer, and compare the two: this will teach you more than a dozen *copy books*.

It may generally be observed that foliage, especially of trees remote from the eye, appears in massses of *layers*, rising one above another; each mass being tipped with

light and based with shadow, which again throws out the tip next below it. In some trees these layers are very distinct, as in the fir, the beech, the cedar, and others; but in *all* the tendency of growth is rather in a horizontal direction than in any other; and this hint may assist the unpractised eye in *dissecting*, so to speak, the masses of foliage that seem at first sight impregnable. It does not follow that we should stiffly lay bare their anatomy in the finished picture; but in sketching from Nature the masses should be given boldly, avoiding details, and showing just the markings of the clumps in light, and the shadows very positive and in an intelligible manner to finish from within doors, where we want clearness suggested rather than finish.

A very effective sketch may be made on tinted paper with dry colours in the form of crayons. They have all the advantages of body colour or oil as regards the lights, without the disagreeables attending the others out of doors. The ease with which the colour is laid on is very favourable to rapidity. The abruptness of the touch gives crispness to the foreground, for ripples, markings, &c; the blending the tints after they are on the paper allows a softness of expression and a dreaminess of effect in the distance which no other medium possesses for rapid working; and a certain depth of tone, which has been considered a deficiency in this method, may be given by deepening the shades with black chalk. If judiciously chosen, the colour of the paper will serve in many cases for the middle tint, and thus save much time. A des-

cription of the treatment in a simple landscape may be useful.

It is a river scene at sunset. A mountain capped by a castle forms the background, with a sky passing from yellow light on the right to bluish-grey on the left, and these tints reflected by the water in the foreground; a bold headland overhung by trees jutting out on the right in deep shadow in the middle distance, also reflected; and on the left, approaching the foreground, a boat with figures and a tan sail, flanked on its left by another mountain in light; the ripples of the river, also in light, coming up to the front of the picture. The colour of the paper, a neutral greenish-grey, serves for the middle tint of the water. The lights of the ripples are put in crisply with yellow ochre, and here and there a short line of white chalk gives relief and brilliancy, especially at the foot of the headland, which opposes to the light its deep shadow. Beyond this, the river resumes its half-tints,and recedes to the foot of the mountain, becoming bluer as it retires. The mountain itself is a neutral green (rubbed in), with light touches of yellow here and there at the base, showing the tips of trees in the sunlight. The mountain grows more grey as it rises, till it mingles with the colour of the sky, illumined with yellow on the sunny side, and cooler on the side away from the light—the outline being purposely left indistinct, to give an idea of distance and atmosphere. The castle touched in with light red in the half-tint, a sharp line of white marking the high light, and its outline also indistinct, but gently relieved by the touch of white against the greyish

sky. A light falls on the mast and sail-yard in the foreground, which stand boldly out against the neutral mass of the mountain; and the colour of the tan sail, forms a contrast to the background, slightly supported by the reddish-yellow light falling on the nearer mountain on its left, by the colour of the dress of one of the figures, which is in light while the rest fall into deep shadow (black chalk), and by the reflection of the sail in the water.

All this is readily given with dry colour, and of course with greater rapidity than if the colours had to be prepared with water before using; and with this additional advantage, that the tint does not alter after it is put on, as is the case with water-colour in the process of drying. The rubbing in with the finger, too, if judiciously done, gives the effect of atmosphere, which we cannot expect or hope for in a water-colour sketch; and the softness of outline consequent on the nature of the material is also very favourable to the same object. The sharpness of touch in the lights too, and the facility of putting them on over the middle tint, are a necessary consequence of using a dry substance and not a fluid; while variety follows as a matter of course from the method of working the under tints, because they are here and there left more or less unmixed. The advantage of mass is as rapidly produced as by a brush, though with the firm and mellow touch of a pencil; so that I cannot but think that for sketching out of doors crayons are to be preferred, for advanced students. Crayons require perhaps a greater knowledge of effect for rapid use than

water-colours, because from want of decision the drawing is apt to become smeary, and the transparent effect of the original middle tint of the paper gets obscured, by the passing over it of colours not afterwards suffered to remain. For beginners, therefore, who cannot yet draw with decision, and are merely feeling their way, the use of crayons is perhaps unsuited; and they had better make their experiments with transparent tints, where a mistake is less fatal, because more easily remedied.

Where it is necessary to preserve faithfulness of locality, the situation or disposition of objects will occasionally be unfavourable to the arbitrary arrangements of art, and in such cases we must resort to ingenuity to endeavour to unite the objects artificially and throw them into mass. Where the objects are so much separated that the idea of mass is not attainable, a low-toned background if the objects be dark, or a light background if the objects be light, will unite them and throw them into mass. By this contrivance, the arrangement of crude and objectionable forms will be partially concealed, and the eye will rest on the more agreeable objects in the picture. We must never forget that the Art of Painting consists not only in representing the greatest beauties that Nature displays, but such a combination of them as shall convey the most pleasing impression, and present her under her most attractive aspects.

Lastly, never touch your original sketch after you leave the spot. A sketch on the spot possesses a reality and freshness that you will seek in vain to give it afterwards.

You will have to be taught by it, though it is your own work, for you were learning, when you made the sketch, of the great teacher, Nature. What you then put down was Nature's lesson to you, and if you touch it when away from her influence, you may obliterate the result of her valuable instructions.

THE END.

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